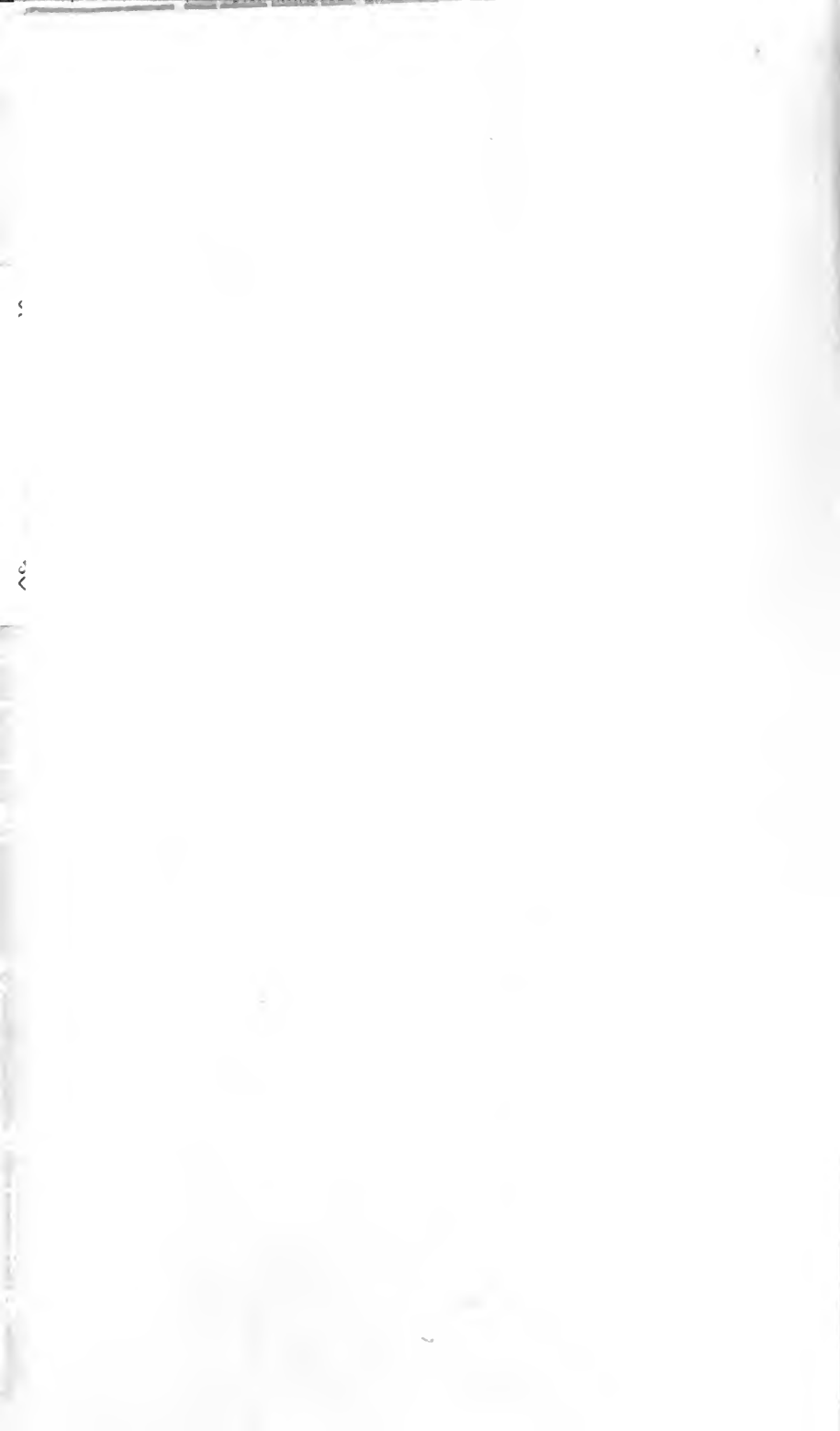


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THE

HISTORY OF A GREAT MIND:

A SURVEY OF THE

EDUCATION AND OPINIONS OF JOHN STUART MILL.

BY

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ERRATA.

THE author regrets his inability to read the proofs of the following pages before they pass through the press. The grosser errors are corrected below :

- Page 4, line 5, for "Theoctelus," read "Theoctetus."
- Page 4, line 10, for "performing," read "preparing."
- Page 5, line 19, for "computatia," read "computatio."
- Page 12, line 14, for "elements, read "Elements."
- Page 16, line 3, for "Mr. Mill," read "Mr. Mill's."
- Page 25, line 11, for "dreary," read "drear."
- Page 29, line 26, for "a," read "the."

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HISTORY OF A GREAT MIND.*

Republished from *Christian Quarterly*, April, 1874.

HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE, the historian of Civilization, in one of his writings expressed the opinion, that "if a jury of the greatest European thinkers were to be impaneled, and were directed to declare, by their verdict, who among our living writers had done most for the advance of knowledge, they could hardly hesitate in pronouncing the name of John Stuart Mill." "Nor can we doubt," the distinguished historian went on to say, "that posterity would ratify their decision."† Mr. Buckle was not a cautious man in his general propositions; but a great deal could be said in favor of both those here quoted. Certainly, Mr. Mill was second to no man in his generation in the depth and breadth of his influence on the cultivated mind of England and America. Shortly after his death, the London correspondent of one of our abler American journals said, "The whole of the present generation of cultivated Englishmen under five and forty may be said to have been brought up at Mr. Mill's feet; though, of course, they have not all accepted their master's teaching." And the correspondent further declared, "In losing him, we have . . . lost the most thoroughly trained intellect amongst English philosophers and politicians."‡ The first of these statements can not be literally accepted, but the second is no more than the

* *Autobiography*. By John Stuart Mill. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1873.

† *Essays*. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1863. pp. 39.

‡ *The Nation*, No. 414.

simple truth. Mr. Mill's influence may wane; there is good reason to think it will; nay, some good judges say it has waned already: but, without canvassing these opinions, we do not hesitate to declare that he was the foremost English philosopher and logician of his age.

No man of culture, least of all a cultivated educator, can fail to be interested in Mr. Mill's intellectual history. How was this great mind trained? Until recently, this question could not be specifically answered. It was generally known that Mr. Mill was not a university man, but that he had been educated by his father, Mr. James Mill, the historian of British India, and the author of the "Analysis of the Human Mind." But little more than this was known, at least in this country. All agreed that Mill's intellectual training had been exceedingly thorough; but what the master's methods and tools were, had not been told. Indeed, some could hardly think of the author of the "Logic" and the "Examination" of Hamilton's Philosophy as having had a history or training at all. Until he emerged from his retirement toward the close of his life, he was little more than a name: *vox, et præterea nihil*. The correspondent quoted above, thus describes his own early conceptions of the great philosopher: "We did not suppose he had any actual flesh-and-blood existence. He was a mere impersonation of logic and political economy, who was supposed to be incessantly secreting syllogisms in some philosophical laboratory." The "Memorial" volume added to our knowledge of Mr. Mill's later life, but threw no new light on his early training. Mr. Bourne, author of the principal sketch, told over again what we knew before. He said, "James Mill was living in a house at Pentonville when his son was born; and, partly because of the peculiar abilities that the boy displayed from the first, partly because he could not afford to procure for him elsewhere such teaching as he was himself able to give him, he took his education entirely into his own hands."* And here the matter rested, leaving us in as much darkness as ever.

Accordingly, when it was announced that Mr. Mill had left, ready for the press, an "Autobiography," men of culture looked to its appearance with interest, expecting that it would contain not only a general history of his mind, but that it would reveal to the world the secret

* *John Stuart Mill. His Life and Works.* By Herbert Spencer, Henry Fawcett, Frederic Harrison, and other distinguished authors.

of his early education. Late the last Autumn this work appeared, and it proved to be a singularly full and fascinating transcript of Mill's mental history. Much more than this it could hardly be, so uneventful was its author's life. In the first paragraph, Mr. Mill gives his reasons for writing the "Autobiography;" the principal one of which was "the thought that, in an age in which education and its improvement are the subject of more, if not of profounder, study than at any former period of English history, it may be useful that there should be some record of an education which was unusual and remarkable, and which, whatever else it may have done, has proved how much more than is commonly supposed, may be taught, and well taught, in those early years which, in the common modes of what is called instruction, are little better than wasted." Certainly, John Mill's education, as described in his "Autobiography," was both "unusual and remarkable." Whether or not it is so significant as he thought, we shall be in a better position to determine by and by. It is proposed, in this paper, to give some account of this education, especially to show how "the much more" was taught, and then to offer some general thoughts upon the body of doctrine which Mr. Mill left behind him.

James Mill was a man of unusual force of mind and character. He studied in the University of Glasgow for the Scottish Church, was licensed to preach, but never followed the calling for which he had prepared himself, having become so skeptical that he was satisfied "he could not believe the doctrines of that or of any other Church." After acting as a tutor in one of the noble families of Scotland, he found his way to London, where he devoted his leisure to philosophy and literature. London was his home when he took in hand the education of John Stuart, his eldest son. How early this was commenced, we are not told; but Mr. Mill says he never could remember, in later years, when he began to study Greek, though he was told it was when he was three years old. His earliest recollection on this point was of committing to memory lists of common Greek words, with their signification in English written out on cards by his father. "Of Grammar," he says, "until some years later, I learned no more than the inflections of the nouns and verbs; but, after a course of vocables, proceeded at once to translation; and I faintly remember going through *Æsop's Fables*, the first Greek book which I read." Before he was eight years old he had read, in addition

to the Fables, the "Anabasis," the whole of Herodotus, of Xenophon's "Cyropædia," and "Memorabilia" of Socrates, some of the Lives of the philosophers by Diogenes Laertius, part of Lucian, and two of the orations of Isocrates. In his eighth year he also read six of the "Dialogues of Plato," though one of these, the "Theoctelus," he says, it was totally impossible that he should understand. How painstaking the elder Mill was, is very well told in one sentence from the "Autobiography." "What he was himself willing to undergo for the sake of my instruction, may be judged from the fact that I went through the whole process of performing my Greek lessons in the same room and at the same table at which he was writing; and as in those days Greek and English lexicons were not, and I could make no more use of a Greek and Latin lexicon than could be made without having yet begun to learn Latin, I was forced to have recourse to him for the meaning of every word which I did not know." In these early years, young Mill learned nothing besides Greek as a lesson, except Arithmetic, also taught him by his father. But he completed what was, for one of his age, a very remarkable course of reading in English Literature, chiefly history. It may not be amiss to remark, by way of contrast, that even bright youths, at this early age, are rarely lifted by the common processes of education to a higher level of intellectual life than that determined by *Youth's Companions* and *Chatterboxes*!

In his eighth year, Mill commenced to learn Latin, in conjunction with a younger sister, to whom, under his father's superintendence, he acted as a teacher. In his maturity he bore a decided testimony against one child's being set to teach another, both because the teaching is inefficient, and because "the relation between teacher and taught is not a good moral discipline to either." His own Latin studies went far beyond the lessons taught his sister. From his eighth to his twelfth year, he read the "Bucolics" of Virgil, six books of the "Æneid," all of Horace except the "Epodes," the "Fables" of Phædrus, five books of Livy, Sallust, many of the "Metamorphoses" of Ovid, part of Terence, two or three books of Lucretius, several of Cicero's orations, his writings on "Oratory," and his "Letters to Atticus." During the same years he read, in Greek, the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" through, one or two plays of Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, all of Thucydides, the "Hellenics" of Xenophon, a great part of Demosthenes, Æschines, and Lysias, Theocritus, Anacreon,

part of the "Anthology," a little of Dionysius, and Aristotle's "Rhetoric;" which latter, he says, "as the first expressly scientific treatise on any moral or psychological subject which I had read, and containing many of the best observations of the ancients on human nature and life, my father made me study with peculiar care, and throw the matter of it into synoptic tables." During these years he learned Elementary Geometry and Algebra thoroughly, the differential calculus and other portions of the higher mathematics quite imperfectly, owing to his father's inability to furnish the requisite instruction. He also kept up his English readings, sweeping a large circle of history and poetry. Besides, he paid some attention to books of experimental science, though more as amusement than as a serious study.

At the age of twelve, Mr. Mill entered a second and more advanced stage in his course of instruction; one in which "the main object was no longer the aids and appliances of thought, but the thoughts themselves." This commenced with Logic, Aristotle's "Organon" being the text-book. His father also required him to read the whole or parts of several Latin treatises on the Scholastic Logic. He then went through the great work of Hobbes, "*Computatia Sive Logica*." In concluding the account of his early studies in Logic, the great logician puts on record this emphatic testimony to the value of that science as a discipline of the mind:

"My own consciousness and experience ultimately led me to appreciate quite as highly as he did an early practical familiarity with the School Logic. I know of nothing in my education to which I think myself more indebted for whatever capacity of thinking I have attained. The first intellectual operation in which I arrived at any proficiency, was dissecting a bad argument, and finding in what part the fallacy lay; and though whatever capacity of this sort I attained was due to the fact that it was an intellectual exercise in which I was most perseveringly drilled by my father, yet it is also true that the School Logic, and the mental habits acquired in studying it, were among the principal instruments in this drilling. I am persuaded that nothing in modern education tends so much, when properly used, to form exact thinkers, who attach a precise meaning to words and propositions, and are not imposed on by vague, loose, or ambiguous terms. The boasted influence of mathematical studies is nothing to it; for in mathematical processes, none of the real difficulties of correct ratiocination occur. It is also a study peculiarly adapted to an early stage in the education of philosophical students, since it does not presuppose the slow process of acquiring, by experience and reflection, valuable thoughts of their own. They may become capable of disentangling the intricacies of confused and self-contradictory thought, before their own thinking faculties are much advanced; a power which, for want of some such discipline, many otherwise able men altogether lack, and, when they have to answer opponents, only endeavor, by such arguments as they can command, to support

the opposite conclusion, scarcely even attempting to confute the reasonings of their antagonists; and therefore, at the utmost, leaving the question, as far as it depends on argument, a balanced one."*

All this time the study of the great classical writers was zealously pursued, not for the "construction" of the language, but for the writers' thoughts. He could now read them, as far as the language was concerned, with perfect ease. In his maturity, Mr. Mill was as remarkable for his mastery of analysis as for any other quality of his mind. In his essay on Bentham, he describes this method, as exemplified in that thinker, in these words: "He begins by placing before himself the whole of the field of inquiry to which the particular questions belong, and divides down till he arrives at the thing he is in search of; and then, by successively rejecting all which is *not* the thing, he gradually works out a definition of what it is."† Young Mill was early introduced to this method in the "Dialogues" of Plato. He says there is no author to whom he was more indebted for his mental culture. "The Socratic method, of which the Platonic 'Dialogues' are the chief example, is unsurpassed as a discipline for correcting the errors and clearing up the confusion incident to the *intellectus sibi permissus*, the understanding which has made up all its bundles of associations under the guidance of popular phraseology." He declares farther: "I have felt ever since that the title Platonist belongs by far better right to those who have been nourished in, and have endeavored to practice, Plato's mode of investigation, than to those who are distinguished only by the adoption of certain dogmatical conclusions, drawn mostly from the least intelligible of his works, and which the character of his mind and writings makes it uncertain whether he himself regarded as any thing more than poetic fancies, or philosophic conjectures."

In 1819, Mill began a course of lessons in Political Economy. At first, his father instructed him by conversational lectures delivered during their long walks; afterward he read the masters of the science, paying especial attention to Ricardo. "I do not believe," he says, "that any scientific training ever was more thorough, or better fitted for training the faculties, than the mode in which Logic and Political Economy were taught me by my father."

Here closed what Mill calls his lessons. He now spent a year

* "Autobiography," pp. 19, 20.

† "Dissertations and Discussions;" Boston, 1865. Vol. I, page 373.

on the Continent; and though, on his return, he prosecuted his studies under his father's general direction, his father was no longer his schoolmaster. Let us take advantage of this change, as he does himself, to offer some remarks on the story.

1. The reader of the "Autobiography" is impressed "by the great effort to give," to quote the author's own words, "during the years of childhood, an amount of knowledge in what are considered the higher branches of education, which is seldom acquired (if acquired at all) until the age of manhood." We have noticed a disposition to question whether Mill really *read* during his early years the writers whom he names. With us, his own testimony is final. He must have *known* whether he read them or not, and we can not think of questioning his veracity. Had this history concluded with 1820, remarkable as it is, men would have said, "precocity," "hot-house forcing," and would have paid no further attention. But when we see this boy becoming the most frequent contributor to the old *Westminster Review* before he reaches his majority; when we see him chosen by Jeremy Bentham, at the same early age, to edit and annotate one of that philosopher's great works; when we find him, in his manhood, contributing to mental and social science some of the profoundest discussions produced in the recent history of speculation,—we are precluded from putting in that plea. James Mill's discipline *did* train a great mind.

2. We must note the constant care taken to go to the bottom of things. Mr. Mill declares his was not an education of cram; says his father never permitted any thing which he learned to degenerate into a mere exercise of memory. As he read the Greek orators, he wrote out full analyses of their orations. When on their walks, the boy gave his father the best account he could of what he had read the day before, using for that purpose notes which he had written on slips of paper; the father adding ideas and explanations of his own respecting civilization, government, morality, and mental cultivation, which the boy was required to restate in his own words. The senior Mill compelled his son to grapple with things, and not to be satisfied with names. Says the latter: "Striving, even in an exaggerated degree, to call forth the activity of my faculties, by making me find out every thing for myself, he gave his explanations not before, but after, I had felt the full force of the difficulties." On one occasion,

the son intimated that what was true in theory might require correction in practice; the father repelled the common solecism with indignation, and pointed out how it springs from a wrong conception of a theory. On another occasion the father demanded to know what an idea is, and not obtaining a satisfactory answer, he expressed displeasure at John Stuart's inability to define the word.

3. Self-conceit was constantly repressed. Young Mill's associates were his father and his father's friends. "He kept me," says the son, "with extreme vigilance, out of the way of hearing myself praised, or of being led to make self-flattering comparisons between myself and others." "From his own intercourse with me," he continues, "I could derive none but a very humble opinion of myself; and the standard of comparison he always held up to me was not what other people did, but what a man could and ought to do." James Mill must have been gratified with the success of his effort to preserve his son from the noxious influence of flattery and self-conceit. John Stuart says he was not aware until his fourteenth year that his attainments were unusual for a boy of his age. At that time, when on the eve of leaving home, his father made the revelation to him; but this was done to forefend the son against the influences of flattery, now that he was about to pass for a time into new associations.

4. James Mill always demanded more of John Stuart than the latter was able to perform. His demands were both excessive and rigorous. "I was constantly incurring his displeasure," says the son, "by my inability to solve problems for which he did not see that I had not the necessary knowledge." This severity, bating the bad temper by which it was attended, the younger Mill is disposed to justify. He very truly says, "A pupil from whom nothing is ever demanded which he can not do, never does all he can." He touches the question again, as follows:

"I do not believe that boys can be induced to apply themselves with vigor, and what is so much more difficult, perseverance, to dry and irksome studies, by the sole force of persuasion and soft words. Much must be done, and much must be learned, by children, for which rigid discipline and known liability to punishment are indispensable as means. It is, no doubt, a very laudable effort in modern teaching to render as much as possible of what the young are required to learn, easy and interesting to them. But when this principle is pushed to the length of not requiring them to learn any thing *but* what has been made easy and interesting, one of the chief objects of education is sacrificed. I rejoice in the decline of the old, brutal, and tyrannical system of teaching, which, however, did

succeed in enforcing habits of application ; but the new, as it seems to me, is training up a race of men who will be incapable of doing any thing which is disagreeable to them.”*

These words are well worthy of being pondered without regard to their author ; coming from John Stuart Mill, they are doubly worthy of attention. We believe they contain a lesson that the present generation needs to heed. It is very generally thought cruel to ask boys and girls to do, at least to insist on their doing, any thing that is disagreeable. Lessons must be simplified, the pupil be relieved of drudgery, education must be made easy ; and with what results to intellectual and moral character, the wise will be sure to see, and soon enough. The prevailing ideas of human training, unless counteracted, will inevitably lead to the formation of a mollusious type of character. Every real educator will thank Mr. Mill for his note of warning.

5. Before passing to the next period in this remarkable history, two questions remain to be suggested. Could James Mill's system of education be generally introduced ? and, if so, would its introduction be desirable ? Deferring the second for the present, the first demands brief consideration.

Most persons will say, “The attempt to introduce this system would end in failure ; we have few James Mills to work it, and still fewer John Mills to subject to it.” Both these propositions are true ; though Mr. Mill insists that what he did, others could do. “If I had been by nature extremely quick of apprehension,” he says, “or had possessed a very accurate or retentive memory, or were of remarkably active or energetic character, the trial would not be conclusive ; but in all the natural gifts I am rather below than above par. What I could do, could assuredly be done by any boy or girl of average capacity and healthy physical constitution ; and if I have accomplished any thing, I owe it, among other fortunate circumstances, to the fact that, through the early training bestowed upon me by my father, I started, I may fairly say, with an advantage of a quarter of a century over my contemporaries.”† All we know of Mr. Mill precludes our calling this affectation. We are therefore driven to the conclusion that he either greatly underrated his own powers, or that he greatly overrated the powers of the average pupil. The first was,

* “Autobiography,” pp. 52, 53.

† *Ib.*, pp. 20, 21.

no doubt, his mistake. It is folly to suppose that a common youth can be put through such a training as this, even if James Mill stood ceaselessly behind him. Perhaps the strongest proof of the greatness of Mr. Mill's powers is the fact that he did not utterly break down under the burdens imposed upon him. We share with the London correspondent his surprise "that a child who learned Greek in his fourth year, read Plato in his eighth, and mastered Political Economy in his twelfth, could escape idiocy before twenty." We also share with him the opinion that "Mill's brain must have been an instrument of marvelous strength and delicacy combined, as well-knit and compact as it was finely strung."* There can be no doubt, therefore, that Mr. Mill, so little did he know of the comparative mental power of children, labored under a great mistake as to the value of his early training considered as an example. It is not by any means certain that he derived all the advantage from it himself that he supposed. It is probably true, as he says, that he started with an advantage of a quarter of a century over his contemporaries; but it is far from certain that he retained this advantage over the ablest of them through life. However this may be, he was greatly mistaken in the other point. What he did can not "assuredly be done by any boy or girl of average capacity and healthy physical constitution," nor by one in a million. But, at the same time, something very important may be learned, in our opinion, from this record of an "unusual and remarkable" education. A solitary household training has many disadvantages, to some of which Mr. Mill seems to have been sufficiently awake when he wrote his "Autobiography;" but has it not also, when wisely conducted, some unquestionable advantages? Under the prevailing system of education, what are fathers and mothers of superior abilities and culture doing for the intellectual training of their children? In an intellectual point of view, wherein are the children of such parents better off than others? The fact is, most children are educated, so far as they are educated at all, in platoons and squadrons, often under the direction of martinets. They do not, for the most part, form habits of severe, continuous mental application; and they receive but small benefit from association with superior minds. It is true that the duties of modern life are very exacting; true that

* *The Nation*, No. 438.

our existing educational system has been produced by the division of labor; but it is certainly worth while to review the ground with an eye to possible improvement. This history of Mr. Mill's mind ought to reawaken an interest in the subject.

In 1820, a considerable change came over young Mill's life. He passed out from the narrow circle in which he had hitherto moved, into a larger one; out from the close and ceaseless censorship of his father, into a larger liberty. He spent one year in France, where he acquired the language of the country, attended lectures on some of the sciences, and took private instruction in the higher mathematics. On his return to England, he resumed his studies, and carried them on with a larger freedom than before. He calls the new period the last stage of his education and the first of his self-education. His father put into his hands the logical and metaphysical writings of Condillac. He read Roman law with that able jurist, Mr. John Austin. Now he was introduced for the first time to the principal speculations of Mr. Jeremy Bentham, as grouped in the "*Traite de Legislation*" of M. Dumont. Mr. Mill says the reading of this book was an epoch in his life—one of the turning-points in his mental history. When he laid down the last volume, he had become a different being. Bentham's principle of Utility fell exactly into its place as the key-stone which held together the detached and fragmentary parts of his knowledge and beliefs. It gave "unity to his conception of things." He now had "opinions, a creed, a doctrine, a philosophy—in one of the best senses of the word, a religion." Strange phenomenon, to find a youth of sixteen wanting a "key-stone," and feeling a want of "unity" in his "conception of things." Next he read Locke's "*Essay*," followed by Helvetius, Hartley, Berkeley, Hume, Reid, Stewart, and Brown.

In the Winter of 1822-3, young Mill "formed the plan of a little Society, to be composed of young men agreeing in fundamental principles; acknowledging utility as their standard in ethics and politics, and a certain number of the general corollaries drawn from it in the philosophy he had accepted, and meeting once a fortnight to read essays and discuss questions conformably to the premises thus agreed on." This Society was called the Utilitarian Society, and it marks a step in the growth of the mind of its founder. Two or three years later he studied German, beginning it on the Hamil-

tonian method, for which he and several of his companions formed a class. Turning its attention to other matters, this class became one of Mill's educators. How this came about can not be better told than in his own words :

"For several years from this period, our social studies assumed a shape which contributed very much to my mental progress. The idea occurred to us of carrying on, by reading and conversation, a joint study of several of the branches of the science which we wished to be masters of. We assembled to the number of a dozen or more. Mr. Grote lent a room of his house in Threadneedle Street for the purpose; and his partner, Prescott, one of the three original members of the Utilitarian Society, made one among us. We met two mornings in every week, from half-past eight till ten, at which hour most of us were called off to our daily occupations. Our first subject was Political Economy. We chose some systematic treatise as our text-book, my father's elements being our first choice. One of us read aloud a chapter, or some smaller portion of the book. The discussion was then opened, and any one who had an objection, or other remark to make, made it. Our rule was to discuss thoroughly every point raised, whether great or small, prolonging the discussion until all who took part were satisfied with the conclusion they had individually arrived at; and to follow up every topic of collateral speculation which the chapter or the conversation suggested, never leaving it until we had untied every knot which we found. We repeatedly kept up the discussion of some one point for several weeks, thinking intently on it during the intervals of our meetings, and contriving solutions of the new difficulties which had risen up in the last morning's discussion." *

In the same way, these young men went through Ricardo's "Principles" and Bailey's "Dissertations." Then they took up Logic—reading and discussing, in the most searching manner, Aldrich, a Manual of the School Logic, Whately, and Hobbes. Next came Analytical Psychology; Hartley's "Observations on Man" and James Mill's "Analysis of the Mind" serving as text-books. And here the company disbanded.

These discussions were fruitful in several ways. In the first place, they developed mental power. Mr. Mill says he always dated from them his own "real inauguration as an original and independent thinker." He continues: "It was also through them that I acquired, or very much strengthened, a mental habit to which I attribute all that I have ever done, or ever shall do, in speculation,—that of never accepting half solutions of difficulties as complete; never abandoning a puzzle, but again and again returning to it till it was cleared up; never allowing obscure corners of a subject to remain unexplored because they did not appear important; never thinking that I

* "Autobiography," pp. 119, 120.

perfectly understood any part of a subject until I understood the whole." In the second place, these conversations were fertile in original thoughts, and they left their marks in permanent literature. Especially was this true in the fields of Political Economy and Logic. Here it was that Mill conceived the idea of writing a work on the latter science, and here, too, originated much of the substance of the work which he afterward executed.

Our dialectician received valuable teaching in another school. There was in London a Society known as the Co-operative Society, composed of the disciples of Owen, the Communist. Hearing of this Society, Mill and his set, all of them political economists and the sworn enemies of Communism, started the notion of having a pitched battle with the Owenites. The latter accepted the overture, and the result was a thorough overhauling of the merits of Owen's system. Soon after, in harmony with a suggestion made by M'Cullough, the economist, a Society was formed in London similar to the famous Speculative Society of Edinburgh, of an earlier day. In this Society, Mill met in friendly encounter a number of young men who became famous in public or literary life; Macaulay, Thirlwall, Wilberforce, and the Bulwers, among others. This Society continued in working order for several years. It furnished a theater in which met a great variety of mind, training, knowledge, and opinion. The discussions covered a wide field of thought. Mill's estimate of the value he received from these discussions, in which he was a very active and, no doubt, formidable participant, can be best given in his own words: "Our debates were very different from those of common debating societies; for they habitually consisted of the strongest arguments and most philosophic principles which either side was able to produce, thrown often into close and *serré* confutations of one another. The practice was, necessarily, very useful to us, and eminently so to me. I never, indeed, acquired real fluency, and had always a bad and ungraceful delivery; but I could make myself listened to, and as I always wrote my speeches when, from the feelings involved or the nature of the ideas to be developed, expression seemed important, I greatly increased my power of effective writing; acquiring not only an ear for smoothness and rhythm, but a practical sense for *telling* sentences, and an immediate criterion of their telling property, by their effect on a mixed audience."

Before he reached his majority, Mill had taken lessons of another master. He was early trained in the expression of thought. His father required him to state, in his own language, what he had learned, and to write full analyses of what he had read. His training with the use of the pen was not the least remarkable feature of his education. At an early age he took up the notion of writing what he called "histories;" later he wrote argumentative and oratorical compositions. In May, 1823, his father procured for him a situation in the examiner's office of the East India Company's service. Here he remained for thirty-five years, passing, by a regular series of promotions, from the position of clerk to the position of examiner. During the larger part of this time his business was to prepare the drafts of dispatches intended for the officers of the Company in the East. At first view, such employment would seem very uncongenial to one following the higher walks of literature and speculation. And yet how many men whose names find honorable mention in the annals of later English literature have provided the basis of physical life in the old India House! Mr. Mill seems to have found his occupation very congenial. "I do not know any one of the occupations by which a subsistence can be gained," he says, "more suitable than such as this to any one who, not being in independent circumstances, desires to devote a part of the twenty-four hours to private intellectual pursuits." He says he always found his official duties an actual rest from the intellectual pursuits carried on simultaneously. What he would have said had his business in the India House, like Charles Lamb's, been writing ledgers as an accountant, instead of writing dispatches as a secretary, we have no means of knowing. But there can be no doubt that his India House training was of great value to him. It greatly enlarged his knowledge of social and political subjects, and in a more direct and *human* way than by the study of books. He was led to study mind in the concrete. His dispatches had to pass the scrutiny of the directors; then they were to be read and acted on by men living on the other side of the world,—both of which facts led him to choose not only the strongest arguments, but the strongest ways of putting them. His own account of this discipline is worth quoting:

"As a speculative writer, I should have had no one to consult but myself, and should have encountered in my speculations none of the obstacles which would have started up whenever they came to be applied to practice. But as a secretary

conducting political correspondence, I could not issue an order or express an opinion, without satisfying various persons, very unlike myself, that the thing was fit to be done. I was thus in a good position for finding out by practice the mode of putting a thought which gives it easiest admittance into minds not prepared for it by habit; while I became practically conversant with the difficulties of moving bodies of men, the necessities of compromise, the art of sacrificing the non-essential to preserve the essential. I learned how to obtain the best I could, because I could not obtain every thing; instead of being indignant or dispirited because I could not have entirely my own way, to be pleased and encouraged when I could have the smallest part of it; and, when even that could not be, to bear with complete equanimity the being overruled altogether. I have found, through life, these acquisitions to be of the greatest possible importance for personal happiness, and they are also a very necessary condition for enabling any one, either as theorist or practical man, to effect the greatest amount of good compatible with his opportunities.*

No one can doubt that Mr. Mill's speculations on Mind, Government, and Society, were considerably influenced by his India House experience; nor that his style of writing, so admirably adapted by strength, clearness, and harmony, to philosophical disquisition, was to a large extent there formed.

Here, better than elsewhere, we can throw in a remark upon the amazing productiveness of Mill's mind. This is not to be measured by the number, size, and quality of his published works. An immense mass of matter contributed to various publications has never been put in a permanent form. What is more, for twenty-three years he wrote almost every "political" dispatch of any importance sent from the India House to the pro-consuls of the Company in Asia. "Of the quality of these documents, it is sufficient to say," remarks Mr. Thornton, in his sketch, "that they were John Mill's; but in respect to their quantity, it may be worth mentioning that a descriptive catalogue of them completely fills a small quarto volume of between three hundred and four hundred pages in their author's handwriting, which now lies before me; also that the share of the Court of Directors, in the correspondence between themselves and the Indian Governments, used to average annually about ten huge vellum-bound volumes, foolscap size, and five or six inches thick; and that of these volumes, two a year, for more than twenty years running, were exclusively of Mill's composition: this, too, at times when he was engaged upon such voluntary work, in addition, as his "Logic" and "Political Economy."†

* "Autobiography," pp. 87, 88.

* "A Memorial," pp. 31, 32.

Education may be considered under two aspects ; it consists of two elements,—the training of the faculties, and the acquisition of knowledge and truth. Thus far, we have been contemplating Mr. Mill under the first aspect; nor are we yet ready to pass to the second. Some attention must be paid to the broader features of his training, and their signification considered in relation to the great educational question of our times.

When the mind of Europe reawakened after the sleep of the Dark Ages, there was but one set of educational instruments in existence. The modern languages and sciences had not been created; consequently, the languages and sciences of classical antiquity were the only sharpeners of mind. Accordingly, when the old educational foundations were laid down, there was only one possible curriculum of liberal study,—the ancient literatures. Partly by force of reason, partly by force of tradition, this curriculum, for the most part, has held its ground to the present day. At the same time, the old studies have long since ceased to be the only instruments of intellectual education. We now have the modern languages, the mathematical sciences, and the sciences of society and nature. Naturally, therefore, in this innovating age when every prescriptive right or claim is challenged, the question has arisen, Would it not be better to abandon the old course of university study, and construct another out of the new materials? This is *the* educational question of to-day. In fact, the Battle of the Studies has become as heated as the "Battle of the Books" in the time of Temple, Swift, and Fontanelle, and much more widely extended. It is commonly presented in the form of an alternative: Shall we have a classical or a scientific training? or, stating it after the manner of Mr. Mill: Shall it be literary or scientific? That is, which education will best supply men with "the necessary mental implements for the work they have to perform through life?"

Those who decry the old education and eulogize the new say: Books, especially old books, are no proper instruments of education; they contain only "ancient" or "antiquated" learning. Real mental training must come from intercourse with the "fresh facts of nature." Let all take notice, then, that Mill derived his education from books; that it was literary; that it consisted in what Mr. Matthew Arnold calls, "knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world." Mill was no intellectual bigot. He found profit and pleasure

in the cultivation of universal knowledge, so far as circumstances rendered possible; he ardently sympathized with every effort to enlarge the bounds of human thought. In his "Autobiography," he says that he paid considerable attention to Mathematics and some of the natural sciences. His writings fully attest his familiarity with them, and the "Memorial" acquaints us with the fact that he was an amateur botanist; but his training came, nevertheless, from his studies of Language, Psychology, Logic, Jurisprudence, and History—all studies that must be grouped under the head of literary education.

What is more, Mr. Mill was firmly of the opinion that literature furnishes the best discipline of the mind. He does not discuss the subject in the "Autobiography;" but in his Inaugural Address, delivered on his installation as Rector of St. Andrews, he gave his general ideas of university education. It is true that, after grouping university studies under the two heads, Literature and Science, he asks, "Why not both?" following up the question with an argument to show that "both" are possible. He says "the dispute seems to him very like a dispute whether painters should cultivate drawing or coloring; or, to use a more homely illustration, whether a tailor should make coats or trowsers." No doubt "both" may be included in the curriculum; but not if they are taught on the extensive scale recommended by Mr. Mill. He strongly denounced the "shameful inefficiency," "wretched methods," and "laborious idleness" of current classical teaching, and held that, if there was a reform in these particulars, his grand scheme of studies could be realized. We firmly believe that a really rational system of instruction, if superintended by good teachers, can do vastly more in the way of conveying knowledge and disciplining the faculties than is now done in our schools; but the St. Andrew's curriculum is impracticable. Mr. Mill here falls into his old mistake of greatly overrating the powers of the common mind. Such a literary education as he outlines can not be imparted to the average student, except to the exclusion of scientific instruction; nor such a scientific education, but to the exclusion of the languages. Precisely how these studies should be adjusted, it does not come within the range of this paper to inquire. But, exaggerated as his views may have been, Mr. Mill's vindication of literary education, both by precept and example, seems to us complete.

While he said, "Why not both?" it is evident that Mill thought the first place belonged to the literary studies. Besides, when he passed on to enumerate the sciences that should be included in the curriculum, he said little of the sciences of nature, and confined himself almost wholly to the sciences that have their center in man,—Physiology, Psychology, Logic, Political Economy, Politics, Ethics, and Jurisprudence. His reasoning on education all along rests on a proposition that he nowhere explicitly states,—the proposition that the most important and the most perplexing questions are what may be called *human* questions; that is, questions of politics, of moral duty, of social and domestic life. He affirms, though he does not make the affirmation the turning-point of his argument, that "government and civil society are the most complicated of all subjects accessible to the human mind." Modern society has become complicated, until there is some danger of its falling to pieces from its own weight; the civilized mind is staggering under its burdens; and the great problems that call for solution are of a political, industrial, juridical, and moral character. How shall we organize justice? how combine and focalize moral forces? how secure the ascendancy of intelligence and the moral sense in the world's affairs?—all human questions—are the questions of to-day. What kind of training will best fit men for grappling with them successfully? The sciences of nature cover a vast field of human knowledge; they answer a multitude of important questions; they rightly hold a large place in the thought and life of the civilized world. They tell us what we should eat and drink, how we should be clothed and housed, how we should be nursed and doctored, and many important things besides; but upon questions of politics, morals, and religion, they throw only a side light. We certainly think that, for grappling with these questions, the literatures of the world—the best things that men have thought and said, the records of human thought and action—are a better preparation than the vaunted sciences of nature. We certainly hold, as we suppose Mr. Mill did, that Thucydides and Tacitus can help us much more in the higher spheres of human thought and action than Tyndall, Huxley, and Carpenter.

In a late number of the *Popular Science Monthly*,* we find an editorial article, entitled, "Mill, Education, and Science." As was to

* January, 1874.

be expected, the editor speaks disparagingly of Mr. Mill's training and views of education. He says Mill's learning was "ancient," "antiquated," and of little value as measured by "modern thought." As a student of mind, he contrasts Mill unfavorably with Herbert Spencer; affirming that, while the former approached the mind from "the ancient point of view," the latter "broke freshly into the study of nature," and produced the ablest work on Psychology of recent times. We have no space to discuss the relative merits of these two distinguished philosophers, to determine from the standpoint of the future historian, so far as that is capable of realization, their relative places in the history of speculation; but we would ask the editor whether an education that gave to philosophy the mind of John Stuart Mill ought to be despised. We would ask, too, whether there is nothing in ancient thought that is worth knowing, and whether there is no lesson for man in the history of man. Besides, are not human thoughts and actions "facts"—facts of nature, if you will—facts so important that no cultivated person can afford to ignore them? Mill's own training was defective enough, his ideas of education sufficiently erroneous; but he was right in claiming for the record of thought a high place in any scheme of education intended to develop thought.

But it is time to pay some attention to the second element in Mill's education,—the stock of ideas and beliefs, the body of positive doctrine, that he was provided with by his father.

Here it must be remarked, first, that James Mill furnished his son with such a body of doctrine. The theory that children's faculties should simply be sharpened—that they should only be trained to investigate truth, and then be left to find out truth for themselves—found no favor with that philosopher. He sought to train his son to discover truth, and to impress him with a proper veneration for it; but he also undertook to teach him what truth is, and to furnish him with a full set of mental furniture. Although he early abandoned his Scotch Presbyterianism, in a certain large sense his tone of thought and type of character continued Calvinistic. He sought to forefend his son against the encroachments of "error." As a result, John Stuart passed into the period of his self-education with a stock of very strong and very definite opinions. He did not hold all of these unchanged through life. Some of them he abandoned,

some he expanded, some he supplemented. His logical training and his estimate of truth made it impossible for him to live passively all his life under a shelter of thought and opinion that had been chiefly reared by another. He would seek to ascertain whether he really saw the blue sky above, or only a mass of mist; whether or not his father's doctrines really touched the horizon of human thought. No one can read the history of his mind, without seeing that he considerably enlarged the old foundations, that he poured a good deal of new wine into the old bottles. At the same time, the leading thoughts that his father had taught him marked, in the main, the boundaries of his intellectual life. He somewhat changed the direction of the walls, taking in some ground here, and throwing out some there; but he never razed the foundations that his father had laid down; or, in the language of the other similitude, he never poured enough new wine into the old bottles to burst them. This was natural; it was hardly possible for any mind ever to lose so mighty an impulse.

At the basis of Mill's intellectual life lay some very definite and very clear metaphysical beliefs. James Mill died before the prevailing cry against metaphysics began; but if he had lived later, he would have regarded it as senseless noise. Nor did his son ever show it any favor. Both the father and the son held that metaphysical studies were indispensable parts of an education. Not only so, they held that metaphysics stands in a most important relation to the business of life. To their minds, speculative errors are the most noxious and deadly of all errors, because they are the soil out of which practical errors spring. In a well-known passage of the "Examination," happily chosen by Mr. G. H. Lewes as a motto for his "Foundations of a Creed," the younger Mill says: "England is often reproached, by Continental thinkers, with indifference to the higher philosophy. But England did not always deserve this reproach, and is already showing, by no doubtful symptoms, that she will not deserve it much longer. Her thinkers are again beginning to see, what they had only temporarily forgotten, that a true psychology is the indispensable scientific basis of morals, of politics, of the science and art of education; that the difficulties of metaphysics lie at the root of all science; that those difficulties can only be quieted by being resolved; and that, until they are resolved—positively if possible,

but at any rate negatively—we are never assured that any human knowledge, even physical, stands on solid foundations.”*

One reason why Mr. Mill's views of education find so little favor with the “scientific” mind, is his powerful advocacy of philosophical studies. Another and greater reason is the method of study that he recommended and followed. He studied mind from what the editor of the *Popular Science Monthly* contemptuously calls “the ancient point of view”—the stand-point of the mind itself; the one occupied by Plato and all great metaphysicians of old. He was not unaware of the fact that there is an objective method—that the physiologist has a psychological message to deliver; but he held that mental science must be constructed chiefly out of the facts of the mind, and *not out of the facts of the physiological organism*. To adjust these two methods—the subjective and the objective—is, perhaps, a difficult problem; but we utter the conviction that they *can* be adjusted, and that they *must* be, before a complete psychology can be evolved. Nor do we hesitate to avow the opinion that the old method is the more important of the two, that more can be learned from the stand-point of Plato than from the stand-point of our physiological psychologists.

But while Mr. Mill studied mind from an internal point of view, he differs widely in the general tenor of his speculations from the great majority of philosophers who have occupied it with him. The fact is, those who hold this ground are divided into two schools—the one *a priori*, the other *a posteriori*. In his review of Professor Bain's Philosophical Works, Mr. Mill gives a lucid exposition of the difference between these two schools. As they will help us in determining his own position more definitely, we will quote a few sentences:

“When we call the one philosophy *a priori*, the other *a posteriori*, or of experience, the terms must not be misunderstood. It is not meant that experience belongs only to one, and is appealed to as evidence by one and not by the other. Both depend on experience for their materials. Both require as the basis of their systems that the actual facts of the human mind should be ascertained by observation. It is true they differ to some extent in their notion of facts; the *a priori* philosophers cataloguing some things as facts which the others contend are inferences. The fundamental difference relates, however, not to the facts themselves, but to their origin. Speaking briefly and loosely, we may say that the one theory considers the more complex phenomena of the mind to be products of experience, the other believes them to be original. In more precise language,

* “Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy,” Vol. I, page 10.

the *a priori* thinkers hold, that in every act of thought, down to the most elementary, there is an ingredient which is not given *to* the mind, but contributed *by* the mind, in virtue of its inherent powers." *

That is, while the one school believe in a factor "added" by the mind—variously called an "innate idea," an "intuition," and "a first principle of reason"—the other denies that there is any such factor, and holds that knowledge has but one root, and that root in experience. James Mill belonged to the *a posteriori* school. More precisely, he was a disciple of Hartley, whose "associational philosophy" he expanded in his "Analysis," and taught to his son John Stuart. This philosophy is the basis of the latter's philosophical speculations. It is the metaphysical substratum of his "Logic." It led him to deny that logic deals with the forms of thought, and to hold that it deals with thoughts themselves. It even carried him to the extreme of affirming that the axioms of "geometry are experimental truths, generalizations of experience," and not self-evident propositions. † The question at issue between the two schools will not be canvassed here. It is enough to say that, in our view, the intuitionist philosophy was pushed too far; that the sensational is a reaction from it; and that philosophers will settle down at last, if they settle down at all, on the opinion that the mind does "add" something to knowledge, call that something what you will. While we hold that Mill's "Logic" is one of the very ablest contributions made by any modern thinker to the science of reasoning, we agree with Dr. M'Cosh, that it would have been even more valuable had its author omitted the constant defenses of his empirical metaphysics. ‡

James Mill was a thorough-going political economist, and shared in the odium which the early professors of that science incurred. Political Economy has always been exceedingly distasteful to a certain class of minds. Nor is this remarkable. Its postulate is, that men will buy where they can buy cheapest, and sell where they can sell dearest; that is, in the field of exchange they are guided by selfishness. Those who contemplate man and society from the sentimental point of view spurn this doctrine, calling it hard-hearted and unworthy of an enlightened mind. Hence, Carlyle calls Political Economy "the dismal science;" Dickens, in his "Hard Times,"

* "Dissertations and Discussions," Vol. IV, pp. 106, 107. † Book I, chapter v, §

‡ "Laws of Discursive Thought," Preface, page 5.

holds it up to mockery; and Ruskin, in "Unto This Last," covers "the modern *soi-disant* science" with all manner of insult. But we can not question that Political Economy rests on an indestructible basis. Its postulate is a broad generalization that admits of many exceptions; but, speaking of men in the aggregate, it is true that they buy and sell where they can do so to the best advantage. At the same time, the science covers only a part of the social field, and the philosopher must supplement its truths by truths drawn from other sciences, or he will fall into grievous mistakes. In the "Inaugural Address," Mr. Mill effectually repels the sentimental objection: "For my part, the most unfeeling thing I know of is the law of gravitation; it breaks the neck of the most amiable person without scruple, if he forgets for a single moment to give heed to it. The winds and waves, too, are very unfeeling. Would you advise those who go to sea, to deny the winds and waves? or to make use of them, and find a means of guarding against their dangers?" James Mill paid no attention to the wailings of the sentimentalists. Professing to be guided by his understanding, and not by his feelings, he accepted the new science in its most rigorous form, and took care to place its doctrines among the mental furniture of his son. He taught John Stuart to detect what was fallacious in Adam Smith's superficial and popular exposition, by "the superior lights of Ricardo." In fact the senior Mill was one of those persons who had an excessive faith in "rules" and "systems," who think human life can be thrown into a set of equations, and that by rigorous analysis the value of the *x*'s and the *y*'s can always be determined. A formula that he had adopted became to him a sort of fetich. Sometimes, however, his practice varied widely from his creed. The younger Mill says of his father (we wonder whether with a sense of humor), "With no resource but the precarious one of writing in periodicals, he married and had a large family; conduct than which, nothing can be more opposed, both as a matter of good sense and duty, to opinions which, at least at a later period of his life, he strenuously upheld." In other words, James Mill thought men should marry and beget children according to a formula; not to do so, was wholly contrary to Malthus, and, therefore, most unphilosophical.

In his maturer years, Mr. Mill considerably expanded some of the old economical formulas. His great work, "Principles of Political

Economy," is no doubt the most popular exposition of the science extant in the English language. Although he intended to keep close to the strict logic of the science, he opened some new windows, through which streamed enough light to considerably relieve Political Economy of its former somberness. These windows are thickly set in the celebrated chapter, "The Future of the Industrial Classes." Professor Cairnes, himself one of the ablest of living economists, after remarking on the dreary outlook for the human race disclosed in the works of Ricardo, speaks of Mill's new lights as "changing the entire aspect of human life regarded from the point of view of Political Economy;" and he describes this chapter as "placing a gulf between Mill and all who preceded him, and opening up an entirely new vista to economic speculation."* If Political Economy is less a "dismal" science than it was early in the century, we have to thank Mr. Mill for it principally.

In politics, James Mill was a radical, and at a time when radicalism was even more unpopular than Political Economy. The Calvinistic mind is democratic per force of its own bent. The great doctrines of faith and necessity tend to beget and foster individualism and self-assertion, which are the very soul of democracy.† His liberal political principles were firmly stamped on the character of his son. The latter continued a radical until the end of his life. In the field of politics, we think Mr. Mill rendered the world as large a service as in any other. We do not agree with him in advocating woman suffrage, nor do we accept all his views of speculative politics; but we regard his efforts to liberalize political thought, to give it a more scientific form, and to uphold the cause of liberty throughout the world, as deserving of grateful recognition. Under this head we can only remark further, that, while Mr. Mill held steadfastly to the spirit of his father's instruction, he very considerably modified his father's theories of government.

In morals, James Mill was a Benthamite. He held that right is right, and wrong wrong; the first because it is, the second because it is not, *useful*. In other words, the "greatest-happiness principle" is the criterion of moral action. John Stuart was thoroughly trained in the same school. In his youth he advocated Bentham's

* "Memorial," pp. 68-70.

† See some ingenious speculations in Buckle, Vol. I, pp. 611-14; New York, 1867.

doctrines in their narrowest form. Nor did he ever abandon them. But with the maturing of his mind and the enlargement of his experience, he began to expand some of the Benthamite formulas. His various discussions of the theory of morals are the strongest statements of the Utilitarian philosophy extant; they are also the least earthy forms of this earthy philosophy.

When he had reached his twentieth year, there occurred in Mr. Mill's life what he calls a "crisis" in his mental history—a period of despondency, gloom, and discouragement. He describes his case by quoting, from Coleridge's "Dejection," the lines:

"A grief without a pang, void, dark, and dreary—
A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet or relief
In word, or sigh, or tear."

We can not give the full history of this remarkable crisis, nor analyze it psychologically, further than to say, it was probably brought on by excessive study. Mill emerged from it with a theory of happiness somewhat modified, as follows:

"Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness—on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. The enjoyments of life (such was now my theory) are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing, when they are taken *en passant*, without being made a principal object. Once make them so, and they are immediately felt to be insufficient. They will not bear a scrutinizing examination. Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness, but some end external to it, as the purpose of life. Let your self-consciousness, your scrutiny, your self-interrogation, exhaust themselves on that; and, if otherwise fortunately circumstanced, you will inhale happiness with the air you breathe, without dwelling on it or thinking about it, without either forestalling it in imagination, or putting it to flight by fatal questioning. This theory now became the basis of my philosophy of life. And I still hold to it as the best theory for all those who have but a moderate degree of sensibility and of capacity for enjoyment; that is, for the greatest majority of mankind."*

We quote this passage,—first, because it is wholesome teaching; and, second, because it has been cited as a virtual abandonment of the "greatest-happiness principle." To this foolish charge it is sufficient to reply, that a man may hold, as Mr. Mill held, utility to be the test of morality, and still think, as Mr. Mill thought, that a given

* "Autobiography," pp. 142, 143.

individual will enhance his own enjoyment, not by keeping happiness constantly in his mind, but by doing his duty and letting happiness come to him "with the air he breathes."

We come at last to the most painful part of this survey of Mr. Mill's opinions. That James Mill, early in life, abandoned the religion in which he was trained, has been seen already. He yielded not only revelation, but the very foundations of natural religion; adopting at last the conclusion that, "concerning the origin of things, nothing whatever can be known." The Christian conception of God was thoroughly abhorrent to him; he regarded theism, as well as the theological basis of Christianity, as profoundly immoral. Holding such opinions with the strength of deep conviction, he was not the man to come short in what he regarded his duty toward his son. He impressed all his own opinions of religion, both positive and negative, deeply on John Stuart's mind. The latter says he was "brought up from the first without any religious belief, in the ordinary acceptance of the term." He is able to say further: "I am thus one of the very few examples, in this country, of one who has not thrown off religious belief, but never had it. I grew up in a negative state with regard to it. I looked upon the modern exactly as I did upon the ancient religion, as something which no way concerned me. It did not seem to me more strange that English people believed what I did not, than that the men I read of in Herodotus should have done so." He was also taught, for prudential reasons, to keep his opinions of religion to himself; and it was left for the "Autobiography" to reveal the blankness of his atheism. The moral phase of this concealment can not be here discussed. It is sufficient to remark that no man who carefully read his writings need have taken, or could have taken, Mr. Mill for a Christian. He never attacked Christianity, or even religion, so far as we are aware. He passed some eulogies on the morality of Jesus; but there was throughout a studied reticence on all points of religious doctrine that ought to have convinced even a general reader that Mr. Mill was not a religious man. At the same time, we have always thought his nature one of those that would naturally be drawn to Christianity. The clearness of his mental vision, his freedom from the mists of passion, the elevation of his sentiments and feelings, seemed to point him out as one who was "of the truth," and who would

therefore hear the voice of Christ. We still entertain that opinion; Mill ought to have been a Christian philosopher. There are two reasons why he was not.

The first reason is the antichristian teaching that he received from his father. The strength of his non-religious bias was limited only by the receptivity of his mind. But in other fields of thought the son sometimes departed from the doctrines of his father; why not in this? This question leads to the second reason.

This is the fundamental defect in John Stuart Mill's education. His intellect was cultivated at the expense of the emotional and poetic sides of his nature. It can not be said that he ever had a childhood; certainly not in the ordinary sense of that term. The "Autobiography" shows no trace of boyish fancies, dreams, and purposes. If he had them, as no doubt he did, they were sternly repressed by his father as useless waste of the energies of the mind. "Of children's books," he says, "I had scarcely any, except an occasional gift from a relative or an acquaintance." He was cut off from youthful associates, seeing only the rigorous logicians who frequented the houses of his father and Mr. Bentham; he had no holidays; his amusements were mostly solitary and bookish; he could do no feats of skill or physical strength, and grew up physically awkward. In this life of early isolation are found the sources of some of his later mistakes and fallacies. Had he known boys and girls in any practical way, had he ever studied in a school, he never could have committed the egregious blunders in the theory of education pointed out above. What is more, he received from his father an exaggerated idea of the place that belongs to logic in the economy of human life. Analysis, the method of detail, is indeed the king of the intellect; but man is not all intellect. He has a heart. Mill failed to see that there is a logic of the emotional nature as well as of the understanding; that analysis can never answer some of the profoundest questions, because they lie on the spiritual side of man, in the region of faith, veneration, and love. In our opinion, Mill, in his own field, was the best-trained Englishman of his time. He had no superior as a dialectical athlete. But his growth was abnormal. After all, it is hardly an exaggeration to call him, what he so indignantly denounced in the "Inaugural Address," "a poor, maimed, lop-sided fragment of humanity." His spiritual nature never had full play.

He does not mention his mother in the "Autobiography," and only incidentally refers to his brothers and sisters. In his extravagant estimate of his father, and in his total silence respecting his mother, we have a striking illustration of his exaltation of the intellect at the expense of the gentle and holy emotions of the soul. A man who wholly forgets to mention his mother, in tracing the elements of his character, is not likely, of himself, to swing into the orbit of a religious faith and life.

By and by, Mill seems to have become partially aware that his training was defective, that his analytic power had its unpleasant compensation. In the India House he sought to increase his knowledge of practical human nature; and after the "crisis," he undertook to develop some of his neglected faculties. But by the time he read Coleridge and Wordsworth, the metal had cooled in the mold, and as it could not again be melted down, nothing more could be done than to make it somewhat malleable.

It may seem strange that one who lacked a "key-stone" in his sixteenth year, and felt a want of unity in his "conception of things," should not have seen that God is the key-stone of all knowledge; that until He is postulated, there can be no unity in thought. But we must remember that he had been taught to believe in nothing that he could not analyze, and to scout the inquiry for final causes as unphilosophical. What is more, there is no evidence to show that he ever made any original study of Christianity as a system of doctrine. He no doubt took the Christianity of the English Church for the Christianity of the New Testament; and even this he contemplated through its inclosing atmosphere of ecclesiastical abuses.

It would be doing Mr. Mill great injustice to suppose that he was merely a servile follower of his father and Jeremy Bentham. He was taught to take nothing on authority, and he really sought to practice the precept. But he was always more remarkable for receptiveness of mind than for original powers, and he never rose superior to the dogmatic teaching that he had received. At one time it was currently believed, in London, that his opinions were "made" for him; that he was merely a "manufactured man;" and he says himself that in the period of his youthful propagandism, he was, what all the Benthamites were called, "a reasoning machine." James Mill's dogmas determined the orbit of John Stuart's intellectual life. Sometimes

he swung a little out of the circle, sometimes oscillated violently in it, but only to return again to his predetermined path. He sometimes entered the region of powerful disturbing forces. Two of these—one intellectual, the other emotional—must be briefly mentioned.

The intellectual force was Auguste Comte. Mill never adopted the Positive system as a whole; but it considerably influenced his modes of thought, and contributed something to the stock of his opinions. In the "Autobiography" he traces the Frenchman's influence over his mind, and in the "Positive Philosophy" he gives his general estimate of this extraordinary thinker's system.

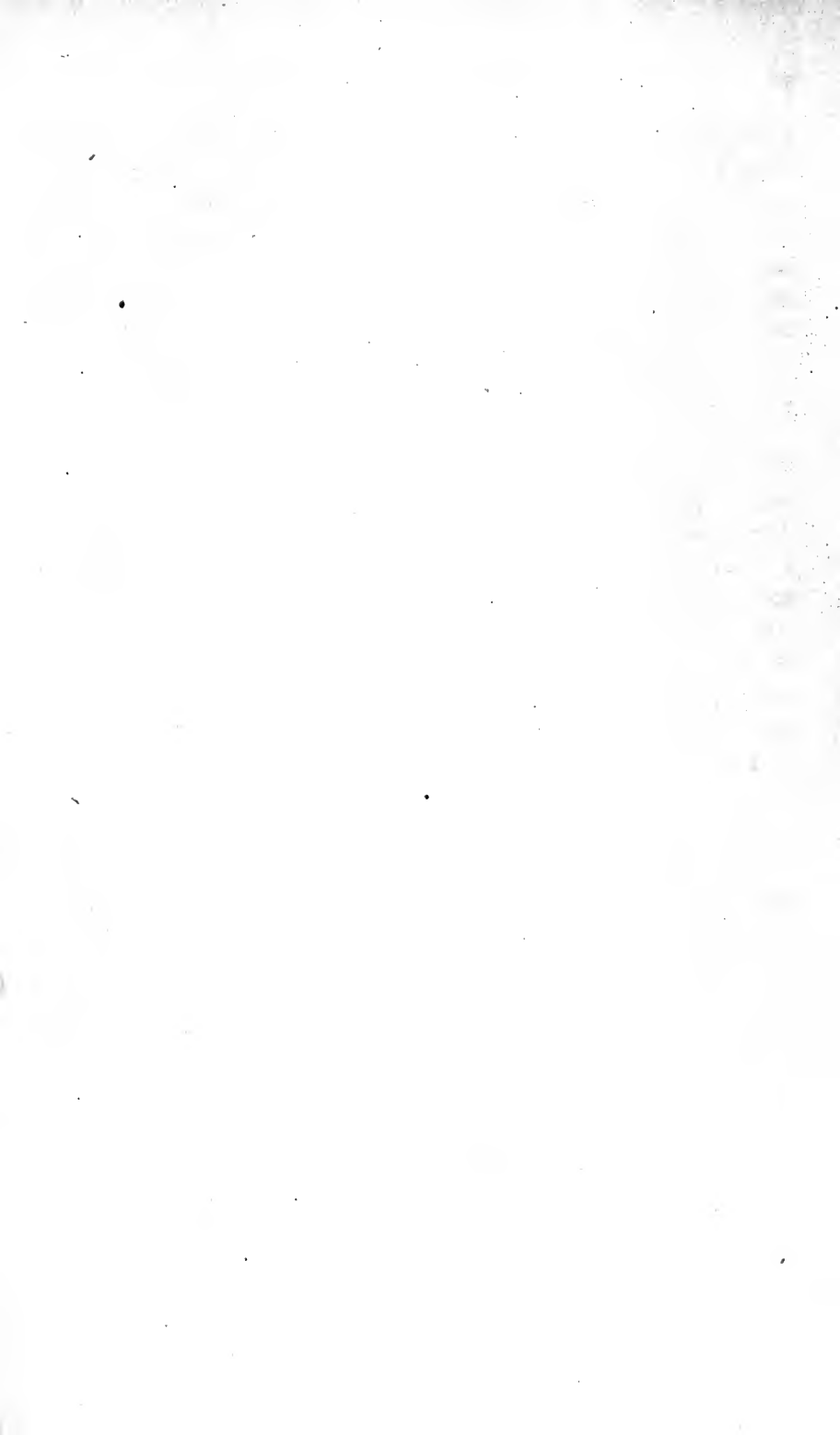
The emotional force was a woman. No space remains in which to recite Mill's Platonic relation to Mrs. Taylor, nor to tell the story of his married life. In all the annals of the tender passion, it would be difficult to find an example of stronger devotion of man to woman. He scarcely refers to her but in the language of rhapsody. He will have it, that she was the real author of the better part of his later writings. When she died in the South of France, in 1858, he placed this pathetic epitaph upon her tomb: "Her great and loving heart, her noble soul, her clear, powerful, original and comprehensive intellect, made her the guide and support, the instructor in wisdom, and the example in goodness, as she was the sole earthly delight, of those who had the happiness to belong to her. As earnest for all public good as she was generous and devoted to all who surrounded her, her influence has been felt in many of the greatest improvements of the age, and will be in those still to come. Were there even a few hearts and intellects like hers, this earth would already become a hoped-for heaven."* From the time of her death, the neighborhood of the grave upon which he had placed this lament was his chosen haunt; and when he died, in 1873, his body was placed beside hers. Whatever the reader's opinion of Mill's relation to Mrs. Taylor, he can not fail to be moved by such devotion to Mrs. Mill and her memory. It proves that the philosopher had a heart, that he was something more than a "made man" and a "reasoning machine."

It is impossible to believe that Mrs. Mill was the woman her husband thought her to be; she was not such a woman to any one but him. At the same time, she was the most powerful force that acted upon his later life. But how came he to form such an exaggerated

opinion of her ability and character? How came the great dialectician to be so mistaken? These are not questions for dialectics. She was, no doubt, an able and an accomplished woman; she opened up the long-pent emotional fountains of his soul; and his own thoughts and voice, that she echoed back to him, seemed to the devotee, as in many a similar case, a wisdom and a music that he had never heard. True to his training, Mill never calls this relation love; he calls it "the most valuable friendship of his life." But it was love; rather, on his part, it was idolatry in what is, perhaps, its noblest form. It is strange that he was not led by the strength and fervor of his own devotion to see that religion is a genuine manifestation of the soul; strange that the grave of Avignon, covered by trees, the home of the nightingale, never taught him to see by faith, if not by analysis, an immortal life beyond. Above no other grave could the lines of Whittier be more appropriately placed:

"Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress-trees!
Who, hopeless, lays his dead away,
Nor looks to see the breaking day
Across the mournful marbles play;
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own!"

Our survey of this great mind makes no pretensions to completeness. No attempt has been made to give a closely connected history of Mill's mental growth, nor to state all his opinions, much less to refute those that we esteem erroneous. Enough has been said to show how his faculties were trained, to point out the principal defects of his education, and to bound the field of his speculations. It is hoped that the sketch, as well as the life that it outlines, contains some lessons that are worth heeding.





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